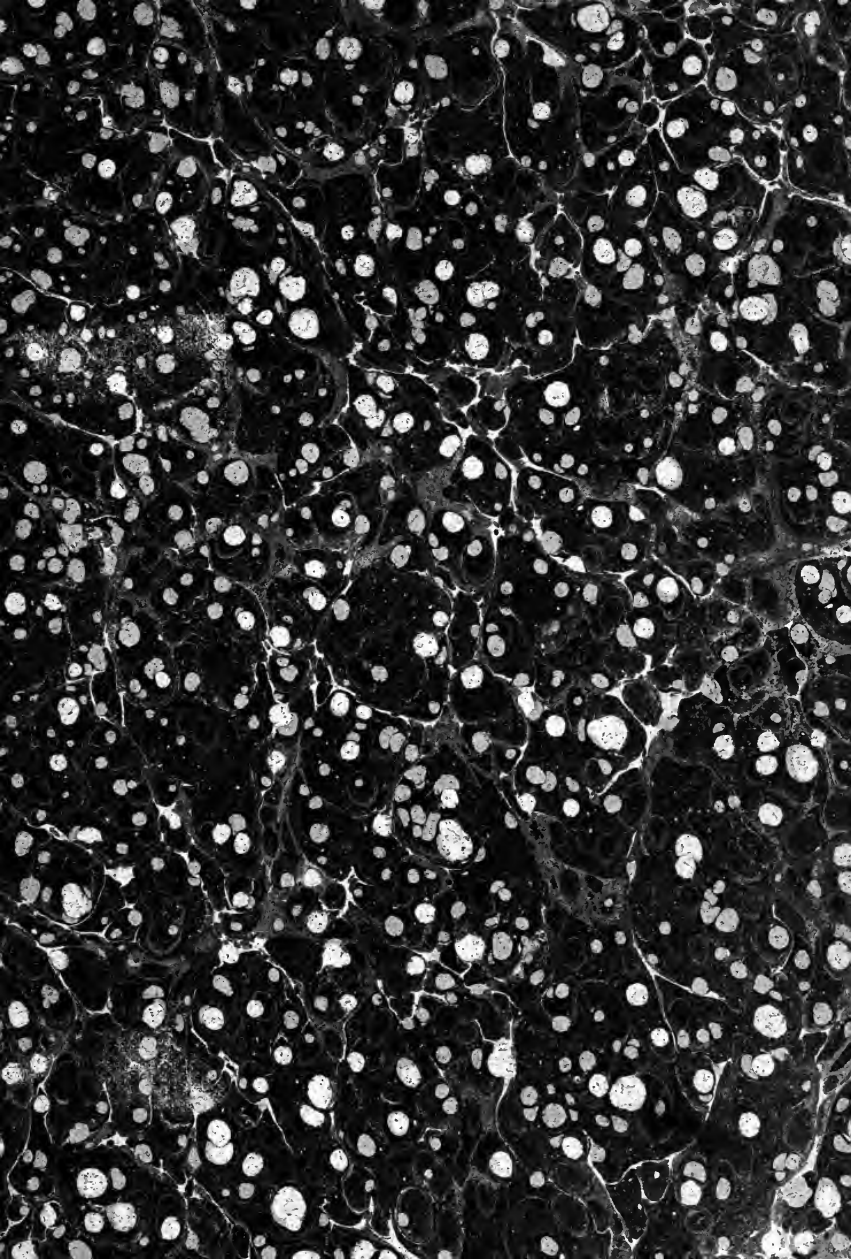


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War



AT GETTYSBURG.

By ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

11

A BATTLE

AS IT APPEARED TO AN EYE-WITNESS.

BY ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

I was at Gettysburg July 1-4, 1863, with my brother Gen. O. O. Howard, but not as a soldier. It was my first and only battle-field. I received there, not my first impressions, but by far my deepest conviction as to the real and essential character of war. The "pomp and circumstance" were not wanting as we broke camp at Leesburg, Va., and marched to the sound of music and under waving banners towards Pennsylvania. The report of the first gun following a distant flash and the slow rising of a puff of smoke over the woods excited a thrill of patriotic emotion. Our reinforcements hurrying beyond the town to repel attacks already begun, and others hastening to gain and hold important positions on Cemetery Ridge, roused my honest sympathy. But when the first broken line of limping, bleeding, "wounded" halted along the Baltimore turnpike, and I attempted, almost alone, the work of relief, I felt as never before war's cruel sacrifice of blood and limb and life. On the second evening of the battle the moon rose as peaceful-faced as ever and the silent stars looked down unchanged on the upturned, ghastly faces of our dead; the otherwise noiseless night resounded with cries of mortal agony from the dying around me. I said to myself, "O God, the moon and the stars Thou hast made, but not this miserable murder and mangling of men." It is not like nature: it is anti-natural; it is of the pit. On the third afternoon I went up, weary with hospital work, for a few moments' rest to the cupola of a farm-house. The thin line of blue-coated soldiers seemed to waver along the summit of the ridge. I involuntarily prayed for their safety, my country and for the right. Just then, above the rattling of musketry and the roar of artillery, there came a clap of thunder from a rapidly rising cloud. For a moment no other sound was heard. It was as if God were saying, "I am mightier than ye all! Hear my voice. Cease your mad

and tumultuous strife!" Here the question came to me as never before, "Is this the work of God or of Satan? Is there no other way of settling human differences, establishing and confirming human rights? Do union, liberty, and law lie along no other road?" Then, as the roar of battle was renewed and volley succeeded volley, it seemed to me that each bullet was hungry for a life. Some lives, dear to me personally, rose in their noble manliness before me. I spoke imagined farewells to the dying. I seemed to look upon dead faces only too familiar. I heard in each discharge the possible knell of friend or brother. Oh, wicked extravagance and waste of most precious things! That young man has, with vast expense of time and toil, trained his bullet-pierced brain for great intellectual attainments. The other has had such gracious spiritual experiences as to be divinely marked as an exemplar and teacher of religion. Learning, skill, wisdom, piety and moral power were won by him by years of toil, self-denial and consecration. Ability was thus acquired for which the world has a thousand aching voids. Alas! his body affords less an obstacle to the passage of a bullet than that of a horse or even a senseless stone. Surely here is a wicked waste.

What effect has all this had on such as come away unslain, unwounded?

Does not this work seem too like that of wild beasts or bull-dogs and prize fighters? Separate the military hero himself from his bloody deeds; forget for a moment the cause of the war in which he fights, — what are the personal motives, impulses, and passions roused into life and energy by fighting? A Christian soldier once said to me confidentially, "I cannot bear to go into the presence of God so angry as I always become in battle." Gen. Sherman wrote, "*War is cruelty. You cannot refine it!*" It is that and worse. It lacks not only kindness and humanity, it lacks mercy, righteousness, justice, — it is a moral monster. However justifiable we may think its alleged cause, however beneficent its results, its facts are hideously wicked. In a divinely created and ordered universe there is, there *must be* a better way. *It is our duty to find it.*

THE PEOPLE'S SONG OF PEACE.

BY JOAQUIN MILLER.

(Except the final couplet.)

The grass is green on Bunker Hill,
The waters sweet in Brandywine;
The sword sleeps in the scabbard still,
The farmer keeps his flock and vine;
Then who would mar the scene to-day,
With vaunt of battle-field or fray?

The brave corn lifts, in regiments,
Ten thousand sabres in the sun;
The ricks replace the battle-tents,
The bannered tassels toss and run,
The neighing steed, the bugle's blast,—
These be the stories of the past.

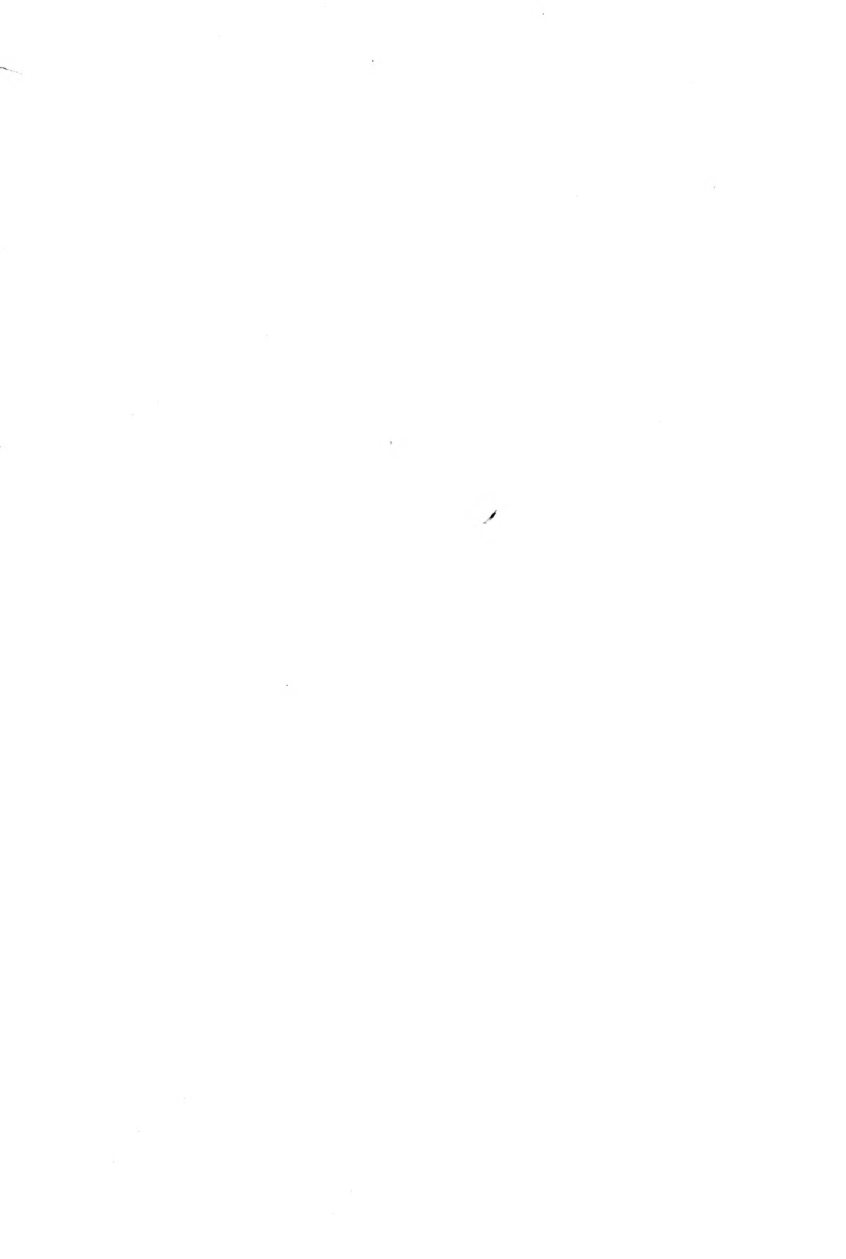
The earth has healed her wounded breast,
The cannons plough the fields no more;
The heroes rest: oh, let them rest
In peace along the peaceful shore;
They fought for peace, for peace they fell;
They sleep in peace, and all is well.

The fields forget the battles fought,
The trenches wave in golden grain;
Shall we neglect the lesson taught
And tear the wound agape again?
Sweet Mother Nature, nurse the land,
And heal her wounds with gentle hand.

Lo! peace on earth! Lo! flock and fold,
Lo! rich abundance, fat increase,
And valleys clad in sheen of gold;
O rise and sing the song of peace
With Christmas Angels as of yore.
The Prince of Peace is at the door!

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